

## A NOTE ON CYSTS OF ZEIS'S GLAND AND SEBACEOUS CYSTS IN GENERAL

by

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ZEIS'S GLANDS ARE ordinary sebaceous glands attached to the follicles of the eyelashes and so the small rounded white tumours occurring at the anterior lid margin are usually described as cysts of Zeis's gland, just as quite commonly sebaceous cysts are still described without comment as being the result of distension of a sebaceous gland. Yet so long ago as 1897, S. G. Shattock wrote of wens or so-called sebaceous cysts of the scalp: "Part of the confusion that has arisen over the subject may be traced to the erroneous views sometimes held in regard to the seat of sebaceous cysts . . . . The truth is that the common 'wen' is a cyst, arising in most cases in the hair follicle and not in the sebaceous gland, its keratinous contents being furnished by the follicle which is lined with an extension of the general epidermis."

In the early stages the epithelium lining the cyst is exactly like that of the hair follicle. (Probably as in Fig. 1.)

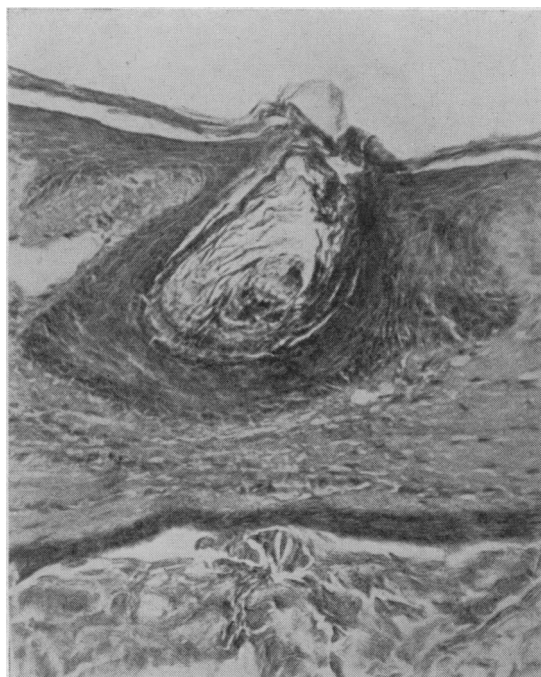


Fig. 1. Portion of the wall of the same cyst as Fig. 2. In the epidermis there is what is probably an early stage of another cyst.

As the cyst grows the epithelium becomes generally flatter but the eleidin layer can still be made out (Fig. 2).

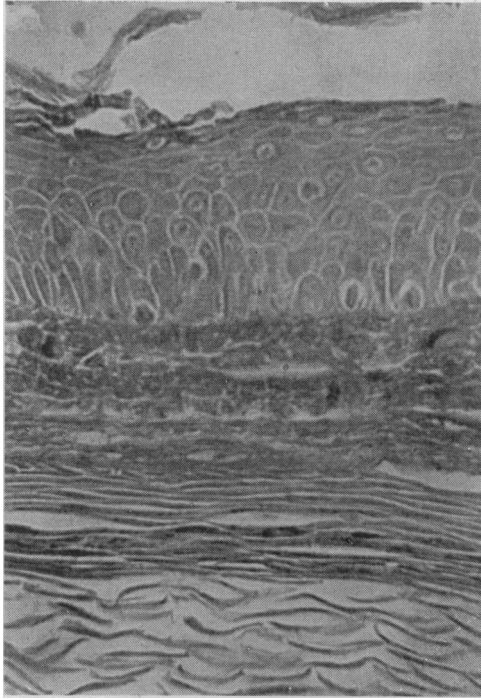


Fig. 2. Portion of wall of a cyst of Zeis's gland. The eleidin layer in its lining epithelium is still well marked.

With further distension the cyst eventually becomes lined with only one or two layers of nondescript cells.

The sebaceous gland attached to the follicle appears as a rule to atrophy and remains of it are occasionally found in the wall of the cyst. The cyst of Zeis's gland then is also formed by the keratinising contents of the distended follicle belonging to a cilium—either a lanugo or ordinary hair. That this is so is further shown by the white colour of the cyst, which is that of heaped up keratin. In this connection it is thus interesting to note that there is no histological difference between a milium and a sebaceous cyst.

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SHATTOCK, S. G. (1897) Keratinising Epithelial Tumour of the Scalp. *Trans. Path. Soc.* 33, 290.